Subject: Ancient Hebrew coins

Feiga, Wilfred B.
[Worcester, MA]

1921

TELEPHONE PARK 3510

WILFRED B. FEIGA
ATTORNEY AT LAW
701-702 STATE MUTUAL BUILDING
WORCESTER, MASS.

August I5, I92I.

Superintendent Metropolitan Art Museum,
Fifth Ave.
New York City.

Dear Sir,-

Will you kindly send me the name of the person in New York City or elsewhere in the United States whon you consider the most reliable authority on ancient Hebrew coins. I am attorney for a gentleman who has inherited one which is believed by the best authorities at our disposal thus far to date back to about 3000 B. C., found while digging in one of the mountains of Palestine. It may be worth many thousands of dollars, and of immeasurable value to the scientific world.

Trusting you to favor me with as early a reply as possible,

Very truly yours,

Wilfred B. Feiga

August 17, 1921

Referred to Am.Numismatic Society
by Metropolitan Museum of Art

TELEPHONE, PARK 3510

WILFRED B. FEIGA
ATTORNEY AT LAW
701-702 STATE MUTUAL BUILDING
WORCESTER, MASS.

August 17, 1921.

American Numismatic Society
Broadway and 156th Street
New York City

Gentlemen:

As Attorney for Mr. Joseph Rosenthal of Worcester, I am enclosing herewith a clipping of the Worcester Gazette, of August 9, 1921 which explains itself. Mr. Rosenthal is willing to sell the coin in question if the proper arrangements can be made. I should be interested to communicate with the expert whom your society feels most capable to judge the age of the coin.

From the history of the coin as Mr. Rosenthal gives it to me I am personally of the opinion that it may be of unusual interest, and of considerable value.

Trusting to hear from you soon, I am,

Very truly yours,

WBF/DJ

Wilfred B. Feiga

August 19th, 1921

Wilfred B. Feiga, Esq.
701 State Mutual Building
Worcester, Mass.

Dear Sir:

Your letter addressed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and your letter to this Society is at hand.

According to the picture in the enclosed newspaper clipping, the piece you mention is a fake pure and simple. This is made by casting and no coins of that period were made thus; they were struck. As near as we can find out, some busybody about one hundred years ago made a great many different kinds of pieces with pigs on the back of them and planted them around through Greece, Italy and the Levant. They have been turning up ever since, to the bother of numistists. Many of these, in one form or another, are brought to this Museum each year. We lately received one from Hamadan, Persia.

These pieces have been written up several times. At the moment, the best reference to them that I can put my hands on is in the Journal Internationale d'Archaeologie Numismatique, Athens, Vol.VIII, 1905.

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW/E
Enc.

TELEPHONE, PARK 3510

WILFRED B. FEIGA
ATTORNEY AT LAW
701-702 STATE MUTUAL BUILDING
WORCESTER, MASS.

August 20, 1921.

The American Numismatic Society
Broadway, Between 155th & 156th Streets
New York

Dear Sir:

I have received and read with great interest your letter of August 19th with reference to the old coin about which I asked your opinion. It seems to me a very important matter and I do not wish to drop it until I have gone into it much more thoroughly. From my personal knowledge of Mr. Rosenthal I know that he is very genuine in what he tells me.

Have you any way of knowing in what language the letters appearing on the left edge of the front are written. The most learned Rabbi in Jerusalem, now dead, told Mr. Rosenthal's father that the script is ancient Hebrew, not the kind of Hebrew that was written in the time of Christ.

Mr. Rosenthal assures me in all earnestness that the British Museum at Cairo offered his father one thousand pounds for the coin thirteen years ago.

I wish you would let me know what kind of a coin you believe this is or what it was made in imitation of, if you believe it is an imitation. Is it Assyrian, Babylonian, Chaldean, Turkish, Arabid, Armenian, Persian or any other class. There are at least two letters on the coin which I am told any Hebrew scholar will instantly recognize as Hebrew letters used in the Hebrew alphabet today.

I am very much interested in this matter and I trust you will bear with me if I appear persevering. I value your opinion

TELEPHONE, PARK 3510

WILFRED B. FEIGA
ATTORNEY AT LAW
701-702 STATE MUTUAL BUILDING
WORCESTER, MASS.

and should be very grateful to receive it.

Can you give me the names and addresses of a few people in the United States who might be able also to give me a valuable opinion on the question.

Very truly yours,

WBF/DJ

Wilfred B. Feiga

August 26th, 1921

Wilfred B. Feiga, Esq.
701 State Mutual Building
Worcester, Mass.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of August 20th reached here while I was away for a week.

I have absolutely no doubt that Mr. Rosenthal and his father were both sincere in the belief that their coin is genuine as I have, personally, become acquainted with others having coins similar to this, who have had them in their respective families so long that they are convinced that there is nothing wrong with their pieces.

As far as I can make out, the lettering on your coin is old Hebrew, but there is nothing to prevent using old Hebrew letters on anything made in comparatively modern times. Antiquarians often make this error when they see something written in ancient characters - they firmly believe the thing must be ancient.

I, however, take with a grain of salt the offer of a thousand pounds at the museum of Cairo; I never knew they ever had a thousand pounds to offer! Also, if my memory serves they never had anyone at the Cairo museum with much knowledge of coins.

Your piece in question is an imitation of no coin. It, and the series to which it belongs, is the pure fiction of someone's brain. The Assyrians, Babylonians and Chaldeans did not use coined money though they used gold and silver by weight. The Greeks about the Seventh Century B.C. were the first to stamp crude lumps of precious metal with a symbol or device, thereby making the first coins.

(Eta)

It is difficult to take this matter up with you in writing, although I could easily show you here and by conversation the impossibility of this being a coin. As a matter of fact, I do not want you to take my word for it; I would advise you to write to -

Henry Chapman 333 South 16th St. Philadelphia, Pa.
Dr.T.L.Comparette United States Mint, Philadelphia,Pa.
Dr.George F.Hill Dept.of Coins & Medals, British Museum
London, England
Wayte Raymond 489 Park Avenue, New York City

But under no circumstances do I care to have you use my name as all of these people would be incensed with me for referring such a matter to them.

Very truly yours,

Curator

Enc. Cutting